



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT—Phoebe Ellman

We were fortunate to have Phoebe attend our most recent Celebration of Children as our alumni guest speaker.

We are so proud of her; she spoke to our gathering from the heart and shared the following with everyone.

Hi my name is Phoebe Ellman and I'm a student at Fordham University.

I haven't been a student at Westmont for 13 years, but I spent my preschool and Kindergarten years there; they are some of the most special times of my life that I can very vividly recall.

One of the most important things, I have begun to contemplate now as an adult, is the independence that Westmont fostered. As a little kid you don't have much freedom in your life but having the chance to pursue what you wanted in the classroom was pretty special, and I realize that especially when I compare my Kindergarten experience with friends who went to other schools.

Also important is the amazing relationships I had especially with my teachers – the respect that was fostered not only between students but between students and teachers. I learned to respect my teacher but also to respect the respect she had for her students. I think that's a pretty important thing that has brought me through school and into college.

I think the most meaningful thing I have gotten out of Westmont is the friendships. The fact that I can come back here and say hello to my favorite teachers is pretty special. Also all the friends I made I'm still in touch with. When I reached high school, I was reunited with some of my kindergarten friends and it was pretty awesome to be able to bond with kids I hadn't seen in over 10 years; to talk to them and to reconnect over experiences we all had at Westmont. I'm still Facebook friends with all of them and now I'm in a college philosophy class with one of my kindergarten classmates. We're still friends even though we didn't go to high school, or middle school or elementary school together. We can still come together and still be friends.

I'm really grateful for that experience and grateful that I can come back, be excited to come back, and still feel welcome.

Thank you very much

